

Chapter 5

Reading Fluency

Learner Objectives for Chapter 5

- Define reading fluency.
- Understand the contributing role of automaticity to fluent reading.
- Know how fluency is assessed.
- Understand how fluency is related to other major components.
- Learn how to provide fluency training through timed repeated readings.
- Learn how to organize partner reading.
- Define what **monitored oral reading practice** is and explain the importance of providing multiple opportunities to read text.
- Understand a framework for assessing students' instructional needs.

Warm-Up Activity and Questions

- Watch the video clip from *Teaching Reading Essentials* (Moats & Farrell, 2007) and listen carefully to the students' reading.
- Answer the following questions and be ready to discuss reading fluency.

1. What is *reading fluency*?

2. What does a fluent reader sound like?

3. What enables a person to be a fluent reader?

4. What is your definition of *fluent reading*?
-
-

Defining and Understanding Reading Fluency

What Is Reading Fluency?

Most educators consider the answer to this question to be pretty straightforward because the observable behaviors of fluent reading are easy to recognize. Fluent reading is smooth, fluid, and more enjoyable to listen to than the choppy, slow, and tentative reading of the dysfluent reader. Fluent readers read words accurately and comprehend what they are reading, so they read with *prosody*, or phrasing and expression. Fluent readers sound as if they understand what they are reading. Fluent reading communicates the meaning of the text; as we listen, we can make sense of the passage.

Qualitative measurement of reading fluency, accomplished by rating such features as smoothness and expression, is possible, but reliability of such rating scales is somewhat difficult to achieve. A more objective or quantitative method of judging reading fluency is necessary for judging student progress and for judging whether a student is at the expected level for his or her grade. For this reason, we quantify reading fluency by measuring the additional characteristics of *rate* and *accuracy*. Reading fluency can be measured and monitored by counting the number of words read correctly per minute in a one-minute passage. The statistic that is valid and reliable for assessing fluency is *words correct per minute* (WCPM). Researchers have established norms to determine expected levels of reading fluency in grades 1–8, shared later in this chapter. Simple, one-minute samples of oral reading *rate* and *accuracy* with standardized passages are reliable and valid measures of reading proficiency.

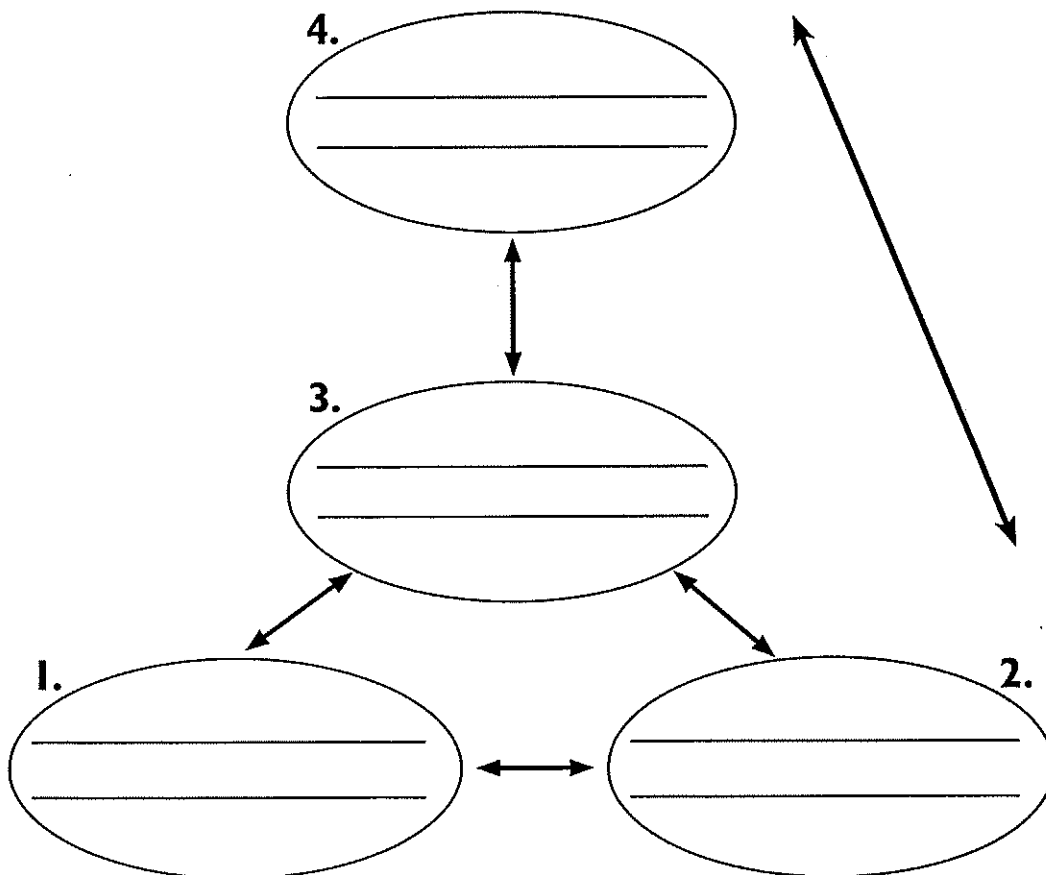
What Is Automaticity?

What is it that enables the fluent, proficient, and seemingly effortless application of a skill such as reading or any other high-performance skill (e.g., skiing, driving, playing a musical instrument)? Revisiting our earlier analogy to musicianship: Why can Eric Clapton perform intricate guitar solos so effortlessly? Why can Itzhak Perlman play a violin concerto from memory? Effortless application of a complex, acquired skill rests on subskills that must be learned to levels of *automaticity*. Subskills become automatic following instruction and lots of practice. Once skills become automatic, conscious application of those skills is no longer needed and attention is freed up for higher-level functions such as creative invention, problem solving, or strategizing. In reading, automatic subskills free up attention for comprehension.

What skills need to be learned to a level of automaticity in order to read fluently and comprehend what is read? The answer lies in the Four-Part Processor and in the menu of language ingredients. Complete the following exercise to determine the subskills that students must learn to automatic levels for fluent reading to occur.

Exercise 5.1**Where Is Fluency in the Four-Part Processor?**

- Answer these questions, writing your answers inside the processor ovals as directed.
 1. Label the bottom left oval. What do we teach to strengthen this processor?
 2. Label the bottom right oval. What do we teach to strengthen this processor?
 3. Describe the relationship between processors 1 and 2.
 4. Label the middle oval. What do we teach to strengthen this processor?
 - Through what other experiences is this processor strengthened?
 - What is the relationship between this processor and the subskills below it?
 5. Label the top oval. What do we teach to strengthen this processor?
 - Through what other experiences is this processor strengthened?
 - What is the relationship between this processor and the ones below it?
 6. Where is *fluency*? Fluency is the automatic integration of **all** these skills!



How Do We Teach and Build Fluency?

We teach fluency when we focus students on phoneme awareness, orthographic awareness, decoding, word recognition, sentence comprehension, and passage reading. Reading can be compared to a multi-component machine: optimum performance is dependent on well-oiled parts and efficient operation. Automaticity in word recognition, which is dependent on the subskills of phoneme awareness and decoding, means quick access to the meanings of words on a page. Once words are decoded and their meanings accessed, fluent readers can devote their attention to understanding what they are reading. When students are reading fluently, they usually are comprehending, as well.

We build fluency when we provide lots of opportunities for students to practice reading various kinds of texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty. It is impossible to be a fluent reader without good word-recognition skills and many hours of reading practice. Students who read more are more fluent readers.

Oral passage reading encompasses and reflects the subskills of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension. If students are very slow at reading, writing, or language activities, timed exercises to promote fluency will be an important component of a reading or language arts lesson.

Connection With Research

Read the following brief research abstract. Be ready to discuss these questions afterward:

- What is the relationship between reading words per minute (originally referenced as curriculum-based measurement [CBM]) and general reading ability?
- How would you describe the relationship?

Abstract: Study of Oral Reading Fluency*

This study examined the relationship of curriculum-based measurement (CBM), oral reading fluency, to the reading process from a theoretical perspective. It tested reading models (to determine relationships between identified skills and WCPM) using confirmatory factor analysis procedures with 114 third grade and 124 fifth grade students. Subjects were tested on tasks requiring decoding, comprehension, cloze items, written retell, and CBM oral reading fluency. Outcomes demonstrated that CBM oral reading fluency provided a good index of reading proficiency, including comprehension.

* Shinn, M. R., Good, R. H., Knutson, N., Tilly, W. D., & Collins, V. L. (1992). Curriculum-based measurement of oral reading fluency: A confirmatory analysis of its relation to reading. *School Psychology Review, 21*(3), 459-479.

The outcome of this study and others like it helps us understand that reading fluency—as measured by WCPM—is correlated with, and predictive of, decoding and comprehension. In this study, researchers applied statistical analysis to test whether a specified set of measures influences responses in a predictive way and found that WCPM is highly related to many other reading skills.

Measuring Reading Fluency

In order to identify those students who need extra practice in building oral reading fluency or fluency with other reading subskills, we should first assess all students to determine those who are lacking in accurate word-reading skills or those who are accurate but too slow. Not all students need fluency-building exercises; only those who are below par need to spend time on specific exercises. A valid and reliable measure of oral reading fluency will help teachers collect the data in a standardized way and will allow comparison of a student's performance with a grade-level benchmark standard. There are several sets of standardized passages for screening and monitoring student progress within a number of assessments. These are among the most commonly used:

- *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS®) (Good & Kaminski, 2003)
 - Measures and passages for kindergarten through sixth grade
<http://dibels.uoregon.edu> or www.sopriswest.com
- AIMSweb® by Edformation
 - Measures and passages for kindergarten through eighth grade
www.aimsweb.com
- Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)
 - Screening and inventory measures for all five component areas: phoneme awareness, spelling, word reading, passage reading, and reading comprehension
 - Includes fluency measures
www.tpri.org
- Read Naturally® Reading Progress Monitor
 - Primary use is for fluency training
 - Includes assessment measures
www.readnaturally.com

Directions for Administering and Scoring Oral Reading Fluency

Is the measurement of oral reading fluency a one-minute miracle? The deceptively simple one-minute timed measure of oral reading provides robust information about a student's reading ability and takes very little of a teacher's precious instructional time. In one minute, teachers can reliably ascertain a student's reading ability and get a glimpse of his or her decoding and comprehension skills. Although the *one-minute miracle* is only an indicator, it is a powerful predictor of future reading success and a reliable and valid measure when students are being screened for reading problems.

If standardized passages are not available, teachers can still estimate their students' oral reading fluency by using their own grade-level passages and comparing WCPM to the following table of reading performance fluency norms (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006). Grade-level text may be found in basal reading programs, reading inventories, and leveled texts.

Note: *Any oral reading fluency measure should be accompanied by a comprehension check, such as students retelling the passage or answering questions about the passage. We do not want students to simply "read for speed."*

Oral Reading Fluency Norms				
		Fall	Winter	Spring
Grade	Percentile	WCPM*	WCPM*	WCPM*
1	90		81	111
	75		47	82
	50		23	53
	25		12	28
	10		6	15
2	90	106	125	142
	75	79	100	117
	50	51	72	89
	25	25	42	61
	10	11	18	31
3	90	128	146	162
	75	99	120	137
	50	71	92	107
	25	44	62	78
	10	21	36	48
4	90	145	166	180
	75	119	139	152
	50	94	112	123
	25	68	87	98
	10	45	61	72
5	90	166	182	194
	75	139	156	168
	50	110	127	139
	25	85	99	109
	10	61	74	83
6	90	177	195	204
	75	153	167	177
	50	127	140	150
	25	98	111	122
	10	68	82	93
7	90	180	192	202
	75	156	165	177
	50	128	136	150
	25	102	109	123
	10	79	88	98
8	90	185	199	199
	75	161	173	177
	50	133	146	151
	25	106	115	124
	10	77	84	97

* WCPM = words correct per minute on grade-level passages

Source: Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006

Using a passage that has been determined to represent the student's approximate grade level, instruct the student: "Please read this passage out loud. Begin reading here [point], and read until I tell you to stop. If you come to a word you don't know, I will tell you the word." Time the student for one minute and note the number of words he/she reads. Subtract the errors for a total of WCPM.

Reading errors:

- *Unknown word:* The student hesitates or attempts to read a word but does not produce the correct word in three seconds. Provide the correct word for the student, and mark it as an error on your copy of the text.
- *Substitution:* The student misreads a word, substituting a different word for the actual word in the text.
- *Omission:* The student leaves out a word while reading.

Do not count as errors:

- Rereading words or phrases
- Adding words (this can take extra time and will affect score)
- Self-corrections made within three seconds
- Skipping a line (do not count the words in the omitted line as errors; do not count them in the total words read)

Exercise 5.2 Practice Scoring WCPM

- Look at this passage transcript of a third-grade student reading aloud in January of the school year. The passage is from *The Six-Minute Solution* (Adams & Brown, 2004).

Moving Waveforms

Sounds are a part of everyday life. Car horns beep. Dogs bark.	12
Children shout. Noisy jets roar across the sky. People whisper to one	24
another. There are hundreds of sounds made every day. It is easy for	37
people to tell them apart. But there are other sounds that cannot be	50
heard by people. These sounds are too high-pitched for the human ear.	63
They are called ultrasounds .	67
Sounds are produced by a certain type of motion. These motions	78
are called vibrations . Sound travels from] a vibrating object to a human ear.	91
It does this by using a sound carrier. The sound carrier may be a solid,	106
liquid, or a gas. One way sound travels is through air. Sound waves	119
make the particles in the air move. One moving particle touches another	131
particle and makes that new particle move. Then that particle touches the	143
next particle and so on. If there is no sound carrier, no sound can be heard.	159

Exercise 5.2 (continued)

- Score the results:
 - What was the student's total number of words read? _____
 - Subtract the number of errors: _____
 - Total WCPM: _____
- Compare the score with the Oral Reading Fluency Norms table on p. 135.
- How would you describe this student's reading fluency? Discuss with a partner, and record your answers.

What Can Teachers Do to Improve Reading Fluency?

When students are not reading fluently—as indicated by oral reading fluency measures such as DIBELS or AIMSweb or by a teacher's own assessment—the teacher must first determine whether the student has the prerequisite word-recognition skills to support fluent reading. Diagnostic phonics and word-reading surveys should be used to make that determination. Reading accuracy should precede an emphasis on fluency-building.

When fluency-building is appropriate, several proven practices will improve reading fluency. One of the most dependable practices is straightforward reading of suitably difficult material on a daily basis. Left to themselves, students may not practice enough or may choose an inappropriate (i.e., too difficult) text. We are all familiar with struggling students who choose the thickest and most challenging books during their library visits. Students sometimes strive to join the “library book social club” by carrying around the books that everyone else is reading! Carrying books around is one thing; reading them is another.

The Teacher as Personal Trainer

Students need a personal trainer—a teacher—to guide them through the process of becoming fluent readers (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005). A personal trainer at a gym assesses an individual's current levels of fitness and then determines appropriate fitness goals. Next, the expert trainer carefully designs a workout routine, beginning with attainable levels of exercise that will gently challenge the individual and, supported by regular progress monitoring, modifies the workout routine as needed to attain the desired results. Likewise, a teacher/trainer assesses students' current reading levels and then carefully chooses texts that will provide practice at the right level, assists during reading, monitors growth, and gradually increases text difficulty as students improve.

Exercise 5.3 The Importance of Text Difficulty

- Experience three levels of text difficulty. Each slide presents the same text content, but the first slide represents 70 percent accuracy, the second slide 80 percent accuracy, and the third slide 90 percent accuracy. After each reading, your comprehension will be assessed.

Discussion:

1. What were your experiences while reading each of the texts?
2. What were your comprehension levels?
3. What are the advantages when students are given instructional-level texts for fluency practice?

The texts used for this activity are included in the Answer Key. Don't peek!

Classroom Connections: Improving Reading Fluency

Prepare students to belong to the “library book social club”—to be able to read those books everybody else is reading—by following these fluency-building instructional practices. Fluency builders are based on practice, practice, and more practice with reading materials that range from letter sounds to isolated words to connected text passages. Fluency-building exercises can be timed or untimed drills; either method requires close teacher monitoring and corrective feedback.

On the following few pages are some sample skill builders for letter naming, phoneme segmentation, orthographic pattern recognition, word reading, sentence comprehension, and text reading. (A skill builder is a fluency drill to practice a skill repeatedly in order to build automaticity.) Students read an appropriate skill builder for one minute, charting their performance over time until a desired rate and accuracy are reached.

Exercise 5.4 Sample Some Fluency Builders for Various Components

- Working with a partner, try these exercises. Alternate roles as student and timekeeper.

PRACTICE PASSAGE 103

Cat Families: It's All Relative

0 Did you know that all cats are related? Small house cats and wild
 13 lions belong to the same family. They have a lot of things in common. For
 28 example, all cats have long claws. They use these claws to grip and tear.
 42 Cats keep their claws sharp by scraping them on rough things like tree
 55 trunks. Pet owners give house cats scratching posts to use. All cats walk
 68 on their toes. Their heels do not touch the ground. Cats have five toes
 82 on each front foot. But their back feet only have four toes. Small pads on
 97 cats' feet help them to move quietly. Most cats hunt at night. They have
 111 a good sense of smell, sharp hearing, and can see well at night. Cats are
 126 graceful animals. They are able to climb and balance themselves very
 137 well. Cats are able to run quickly and make great leaps.

148 Cats that live in homes are called house cats. Cats are not as
 161 friendly as dogs. But they are neat and need less care than dogs. There
 175 are two kinds of house cats. One kind has long hair and the other has
 190 short hair. Pet cats should be given a warm, dry box for sleeping. They
 204 need two or three meals each day.

211 House cats make very good pets for some people.

220

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

= CWPM _____

Practice Passages 73

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(Adams & Brown, 2007b, p. 73)

(continued)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

PRACTICE PASSAGE 812

Archaeology: Digging for Buried Treasure

0 Archaeology is the study of earlier civilizations. Scientists who
 9 study early times are called archaeologists. Archaeologists look for
 18 artifact clues. Artifacts are manmade objects like pottery or tools.
 28 Artifacts provide important information. Sometimes artifacts are found
 36 by accident. Other times, artifacts are discovered by excavation. Artifacts
 46 can be preserved in sand and ice for many years. For example, treasures
 59 found in Egyptian tombs were buried in dry sand. They were found intact
 72 thousands of years later! When artifacts are found, they must be cleaned
 84 to remove sand or soil. Their exact position must be recorded. Artifacts
 96 are photographed so they can be studied. Artifacts provide important
 106 clues in helping to understand early humans. The archaeologists try
 116 to determine when and why the artifacts were important. They study
 127 artifacts to find out about the lives of the people who used them. Artifacts
 141 can provide clues as to what earlier people ate and drank. Artifacts can
 154 help determine whether ancient people traveled and if they played games.

165 Archaeologists in the United States look for Native American relics.
 175 These artifacts help them to learn facts about the Indians who lived
 187 before Columbus' time. Archaeologists in other parts of the world have
 198 found temples that were covered by a volcanic eruption more than a
 210 thousand years ago. Archaeology expeditions are ongoing all over the
 220 world. Sometimes governments pay for these expeditions. Sometimes
 228 colleges or private foundations absorb the cost. New discoveries are made
 239 all over the world every day!

245

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

= CWPM _____

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

Fluency Graph 1

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____

PARTNER: _____ DATE: _____

Correct Words Per Minute																				
200																				
195																				
190																				
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DATE																				
PASSAGE NUMBER																				

290 The Six-Minute Solution: A Reading Fluency Program (Secondary Level) © 2007 Scripta West Educational Services. All rights reserved.

(Adams & Brown, 2007b, p. 290)

(continued)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

SET 13

Automatic Word List

0	perhaps	itself	York	it's	times
5	law	human	line	above	name
10	example	action	company	hands	local
15	show	whether	five	history	gave
20	today	either	act	feet	across
25	perhaps	itself	York	it's	times
30	law	human	line	above	name
35	example	action	company	hands	local
40	show	whether	five	history	gave
45	today	either	act	feet	across
50	perhaps	itself	York	it's	times
55	law	human	line	above	name
60	example	action	company	hands	local
65	show	whether	five	history	gave
70	today	either	act	feet	across
75					

Total Words Read _____

- Errors _____

= CWPM _____

Automatic Word Lists 239

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(Adams & Brown, 2007b, p. 239)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

Correct	Error
First Try	
Second Try	

SEE TO MARK

Simple Subject and Verb in Sentences

Directions: Underline the simple subject once; the verb twice.



1. My cousins live in Indianapolis.
2. The swimmers waited for the starting whistle.
3. Nancy played the flute in the band.
4. Almost all the beekeepers wear protective masks.
5. Jamal helped with the rink after school.
6. The two boys built a chicken coop.
7. Lucia caught the fly easily.
8. The copilot radioed the tower.
9. Tall elms lined the avenue.
10. The three girls walked home together.
11. The desktop was uneven.
12. The three boys were cousins.
13. The farmer noticed the vacant stall.
14. Their car is a compact.
15. That CD sounds scratchy.
16. The washing machine had stopped.
17. Kathy had been ready for over an hour.

18. The girls have finished their work.
19. The two ducks were huddling near the pond.
20. Chuck does not like chocolate ice cream.
21. I will endorse this candidate.
22. The workers pushed and shoved with their shoulders.
23. Nisha folded the picture and cut it.
24. Everyone swam, played ball, and then ate a good lunch.
25. Marie and her father skate and ski together.
26. High above our heads stretched the Bay Bridge.
27. Over the housetops roared the wind.
28. Please walk the dog after dinner, you
29. Ling ran through the yard.
30. The kittens wandered around the room.
31. Her teacher read the story to the class.
32. Have you seen that movie yet?
33. Their new car was bright red.
34. The children listened to the music.

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(Beck, Anderson, & Conrad, 2005, p. 221)

(continued)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

Letter Name Cumulative Review

1. "Today we practice saying the letter names fast."

"Hoy vamos a practicar diciendo los nombres de las letras rápidamente."

2. "Point to the letter, and say its name."

"Señalen la letra y díganme el nombre."

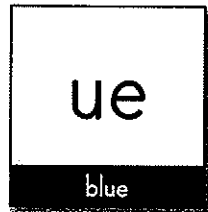
Make it a game-like format (e.g., "Let's see how many letters you can name in one minute.")(e.g., "Veamos cuántas letras que ustedes pueden nombrar en un minuto.") Attempt to get the children to practice several times.

	r	p	s	b	c
5	w	s	i	o	J
10	D	R	t	P	n
15	B	M	W	T	l
20	H	j	g	r	t
25	p	s	b	g	w
30	A	b	i	j	R
35	H	C	b	P	n
40	a	l	t	w	B
45	n	r	J	O	C
50	b	p	n	i	a

Lesson 20 - Page 381

(Nelson, Cooper, & Gonzalez, 2004, p. 381)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)



ue	ck truck	ou cloud	h hat
ee	t table	ee tree	y yellow
ue	ck	qu queen	er fern
ck	ou	ue	sw swim
tr train	j jet	wh whale	ck

LESSON 50

Say the Sounds

- "ue is our new vowel team. The two vowels together make one sound, /oo/."
- "Point to each letter or letter pair. Say the sound."

Write the letter or letter pair that makes the ____ sound."

Sound Patterns

170 Lessons

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(Vadasy et al., 2005, p. 170)

(continued)

Exercise 5.4 (continued)

blue

blue	sifter	pouch
coffee	noun	glue
wham	due	sixteen
clue	ground	cloudy
deeper	with	thunder

by	she	saw
want	house	my
mouse	were	what
there	they	over

Lesson 50 cont'd

Word Reading

► "Sound these out and say them fast."

"What sound does ____ start with?"

"What sound(s) does ____ end with?"

"What is the middle/ vowel sound in ____?"

✎ "Now you spell ____."

Choose three words for student to spell and read.

Sight Words

► Have student read, point and spell, and then reread each word.

✎ Dictate four sight words for student to spell and read.

Sound Patterns

Lessons 171

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(Vadasy et al., 2005, p. 171)

Exercise 5.5 Reading Nonsense Words

- How well a student reads nonsense words is a good indicator of how well the student knows and uses phonics to recognize new words. While nonsense words are not generally used to *teach* decoding skills, they are a valid and reliable *measure* of decoding skills. If students make errors on nonsense words, they probably need more phonics instruction to improve their word-reading accuracy before they attempt to increase their reading speed.
- Try to read these nonsense syllables. Which ones are you unsure of? Go over them with a partner and/or your trainer.

vog	tel	ut
zek	bux	pef
trum	blesh	splin
gake	pune	lete
tark	yort	mir
soik	zail	shay
quaw	warth	prew

Monitor Oral Reading

Research suggests that teachers should *monitor and assist* students while they are reading to improve their fluency (Stahl, 2004):

- Listen to students read, provide feedback, ask for a retell, and assist with the decoding of unknown or missed words.
- Provide daily and frequent assisted opportunities for students to read orally.

This method appears to increase reading fluency more than unassisted, independent reading.

Text difficulty is a consideration when the goal is to increase levels of reading fluency; however, research does not provide conclusive guidance to help us know which level, easy or difficult, will be most effective in helping students gain reading fluency. At this time, more challenging instructional-level text appears to result in higher gains (Stahl, 2004). If students are not reading at benchmark levels on fluency measures, frequent oral reading of *instructional-level text*, assisted and with repetition (repeated readings of the same text), can help students improve. Be a personal trainer by carefully choosing the text for oral reading and by monitoring the reading process.

Answer these questions and share your answers:

- How will you provide your students with opportunities for extended oral reading practice?

- How will you monitor their reading?

Model Fluent Reading

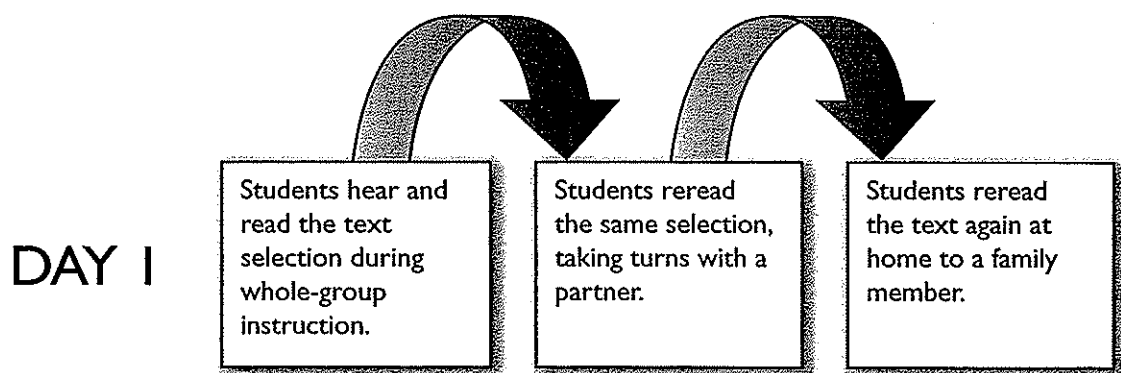
Read often to students from well-written literature:

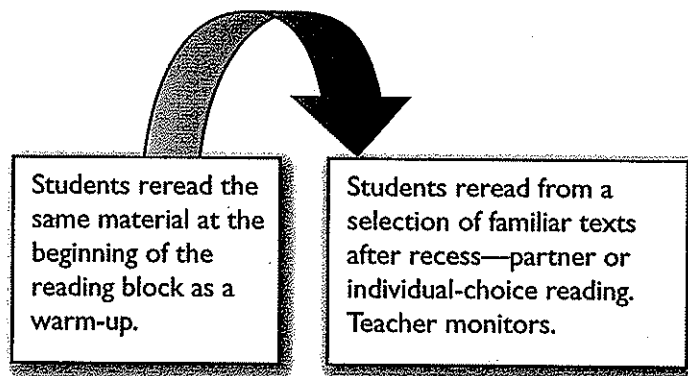
- Model expression, hesitations, and inflection as guided by punctuation, content, and phrasing.
- Model comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading) when clarification is needed, probing the context for new word meanings and checking decoding of “unfamiliar” words.
- What’s your favorite book to read aloud?

Repeated Reading

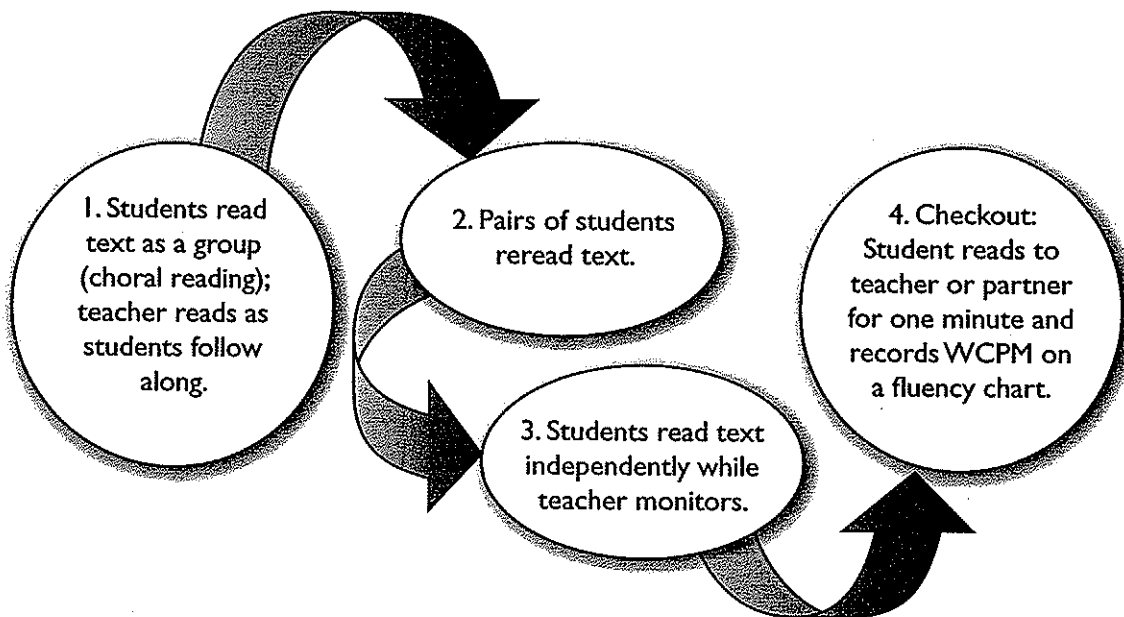
Rereading is necessary only for students whose WCPM is below expectations. Repeated readings can take on many different formats and procedures, but generally any repeated reading technique will direct students to read and reread material three or four times. Remember to monitor and assist during reading!

A repeated-reading formula for **elementary** students who need fluency training might look like this:



DAY 2

Here is a repeated-reading formula for **intermediate and secondary** students who need fluency training:



Brainstorm and share other ideas for providing repeated-reading opportunities (all grade levels):

Reminder: During monitored independent oral reading, the teacher actively participates by moving around the room, listening and checking for accurate word reading and comprehension through spot checks.

Exercise 5.6**View a Video Demonstration of Partner Reading**

(*Teaching Reading Essentials* [Moats & Farrell, 2007], Part 3, Demonstration 22)
Technique is from Mathes, Torgesen, Allen, & Allor (2001).

- Watch what the teacher does to teach students how to help each other read more fluently.
- Note what happens during the “I Do,” “We Do,” and “You Do” parts of the lesson:

(I Do) _____

(We Do) _____

(You Do) _____

Exercise 5.7**Research on Partner Reading and Other Techniques**

- Many of the previous methods suggested for setting up classroom practice routines included peer partnering as an organizational and management tool. Just what does research say about this practice? What does research tell us about reading prosody?
- Read the following three abstracts, note the findings that are most meaningful to your teaching, and compile a summary of the findings. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts.

Abstract #1 (Stahl & Heubach, 2005)

This paper reports the results of a two-year project designed to reorganize basal reading instruction to stress fluent reading and automatic word recognition. The reorganized reading program had three components: a redesigned basal reading lesson that included repeated reading and partner reading, a choice reading period during the day, and a home reading program. Over two years of program implementation, students made significantly greater-than-expected growth in reading achievement in all fourteen classes. All but two children who entered second grade reading at a primer level or higher (and half of those who did not) were reading at grade level or higher by the end of the year. Growth in fluency and accuracy appeared to be consistent over the whole year. Students' and teachers' attitudes toward the program were positive. In evaluating individual components, we found that self-selected pairs seemed to work best and that children chose partners primarily out of friendship.

Exercise 5.7 (continued)

Children tended to choose books that were at or slightly below their instructional level. In addition, children seemed to benefit instructionally from more difficult materials than generally assumed; this was probably because of the greater amount of scaffolding provided in this program.

Stahl, S. A., & Heubach, K. H. (2005). Fluency-oriented reading instruction. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 37(1), 25–60.

Key points: _____

Abstract #2 (Meisinger, Schwanenflugel, Bradley, & Stahl, 2004)

The influence of social relationships, positive interdependence, and teacher structure on the quality of partner reading interactions was examined. Partner reading, a scripted cooperative learning strategy, is often used in classrooms to promote the development of fluent and automatic reading skills. Forty-three pairs of second grade children were observed during partner reading sessions taking place in twelve classrooms. The degree to which the partners displayed social cooperation (instrumental support, emotional support, and conflict management) and on-task/off-task behavior was evaluated. Children who chose their own partners showed greater social cooperation than children whose partners were selected by teachers. However, when the positive interdependence requirements of the task were not met within the pair (neither child had the skills to provide reading support, or no one needed support), lower levels of on-task behavior were observed. Providing basic partner reading script instruction at the beginning of the year was associated with better social cooperation during partner reading, but providing elaborated instruction or no instruction was associated with poorer social cooperation. It is recommended that teachers provide basic script instruction and allow children to choose their own partners. Additionally, pairings of low-ability children with other low-ability children and high-ability children with other high-ability children should be avoided. Teachers may want to suggest alternate partners for children who inadvertently choose such pairings or adjust the text difficulty to the pair. Overall, partner reading seems to be an enjoyable pedagogical strategy for teaching reading fluency.

Meisinger, E. B., Schwanenflugel, P. J., Bradley, B. A., & Stahl, S. A. (2004). Interaction quality during partner reading. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 36(2), 111–140.

Key points: _____

Continued

Exercise 5.7 (continued)**Abstract #3** (Schwanenflugel, Hamilton, Kuhn, Wisenbaker, & Stahl, 2004)

Prosodic reading, or reading with expression, is considered one of the hallmarks of fluent reading. The major purpose of the study was to learn how reading prosody is related to decoding and reading comprehension skills. Suprasegmental* features of oral reading were measured in second and third grade children ($n = 123$) and twenty-four adults. Reading comprehension and word decoding skills were assessed ... Two structural equation models found evidence of a relationship between decoding speed and reading prosody as well as decoding speed and comprehension. There was only minimal evidence that prosodic reading was an important mediator of reading comprehension skill.

- * Suprasegmental features are vocal effects that extend over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as pitch, stress, tone, intonation, or juncture pattern. Suprasegmental features are often used for tone, vowel length, and features like nasalization and aspiration.

Schwanenflugel, P. J., Hamilton, A. M., Kuhn, M. R., Wisenbaker, J. M., & Stahl, S. A. (2004).
Becoming a fluent reader: Reading skill and prosodic features in the oral reading of young readers.
Journal of Educational Psychology, 96(1), 119–129.

Key points:

Summary Discussion

- How can this research inform and influence decisions made in classrooms?

Monitoring Student Progress

Regular monitoring of student progress provides teachers with the necessary feedback about whether instruction is effective. Several years ago, assessment practices required teachers to wait long periods of time—sometimes until the end of a school year—to learn whether students had made adequate progress. With the advent of reliable and valid fluency measures, teachers can now monitor student progress regularly and frequently, using the results to continually update and target instructional focus.

Progress monitoring informs teachers and tells them when instructional changes need to be made. If progress monitoring indicates that students are not making progress, then instructional methods and materials need to be adjusted to increase the possibility that students will make gains. When students are making progress, teachers can continue with the current instruction knowing that students are responding positively to instruction.

The progress monitoring process is illustrated on the simple fluency chart that follows. Plot the data points. Use the fluency norms found in this section to assist with establishing a target goal for a student's passage-reading fluency. Determine the number of weeks the intervention will continue. Draw an **aim line** on the chart that will connect the current baseline performance with the target WCPM. Then, record the student's WCPM on weekly timed readings.

Example of Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Graph (Fluency Chart)

WCPM	Week 1 1/30/06	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
120										
115										
110										
105										
100										
95										
90										
85										
80										
75										
70										
65										
Score										

Exercise 5.8 Plotting and Interpreting Oral Reading Fluency Data

- Plot the following progress monitoring WCPM on the preceding Fluency Chart:

Week 1: 80	Week 6: 90
Week 2: 86	Week 7: 93
Week 3: 90	Week 8: 96
Week 4: 93	Week 9: 96
Week 5: 89	Week 10: 102

- This student's baseline data was taken during the winter of third grade. Compare this Fluency Chart with the Oral Reading Fluency Norms table (p. 135) to answer these questions:

- What is the student's baseline WCPM? _____
- What is the student's target WCPM (spring target)? _____
— Connect the baseline data point with the target data point to create the aim line.
- How many weeks does the student have to make the target goal? _____
- How many words per minute gain does the student need to make each week in order to reach the target goal as outlined on the chart? _____
- What are some changes in instruction the teacher could make if the student is not making progress toward the target goal (interventions)? _____

- Discuss the student's progress with a partner. Be ready to discuss the progress monitoring process with the whole group.

An Assessment and Grouping Framework

Poor readers are not all alike. You now have the conceptual framework to think about differentiating instruction and forming small groups for intervention. Although the majority of students will be distinguished by *level of reading skill*, they may also differ by the *type of problem* they exhibit:

- Almost all poor readers (about 90 percent) are weak in phonics and word recognition. This majority usually needs instruction in all components.
- Most poor readers (70–80 percent) who are weak in phonics have problems with speech-sound awareness (phonology) early in reading development. Some, with severe phonological problems, will need very skilled instruction in phoneme awareness.
- Some poor readers (10–15 percent) have a specific problem developing automatic, fast word reading, even though they may read words accurately. Fluency building will be a stronger focus of their intervention.
- Some poor readers (10–15 percent) can read words accurately but do not comprehend them. This is especially true of ELL and autism-spectrum students, who need focus on many comprehension skills and strategies.
- The majority of poor readers (at least 70 percent) have trouble with three characteristics—word recognition, fluency, and comprehension—in combination, so most supplementary interventions should be comprehensive.

Take 2 Review

- Complete this two-column organizer.
- In the first column are restatements of main ideas. Work with the group or your partner to complete the second column. List a few details that elaborate the main ideas or that state the relevance of those ideas for your school or classroom.

Knowledge/Main Ideas	Application/Practice
1. Several subskills must be learned to automatic levels for fluent reading to occur.	
2. Reading fluency, as measured by WCPM, is related to comprehension skills.	
3. Students need a personal trainer in the form of a teacher who understands the importance of supported practice to build fluency skills.	

Instructional Programs and Resources for Developing Fluency

- *The Six-Minute Solution: A Reading Fluency Program*—Primary Level (Adams & Brown, 2007a); Intermediate Level (Adams & Brown, 2007b); and Secondary Level (Adams & Brown, 2007c)
- *REWARDS: Multisyllabic Word Reading Strategies* (grades 4–12) (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2005); *REWARDS: Multisyllabic Word Reading Strategies—Intermediate Level* (grades 4–6) (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2006)
- *Basic Skill Builders* series (www.sopriswest.com)
- *K-PALS* (Mathes, Clancy-Menchetti, & Torgesen, 2001); *First Grade PALS* (Mathes, Torgesen, Allen, & Allor, 2001)
- *Read Naturally* products (www.readnaturally.com)
- *Great Leaps Reading* program (www.greatleaps.com)
- *QuickReads* series (www.pearsonlearning.com)

What Else Is There to Learn About Fluency and Assessment?

These topics are addressed in more depth in LETRS *Module 5, Getting Up to Speed: Developing Fluency* (Moats, 2004e); *Module 8, Assessment for Prevention and Early Intervention* (Moats, 2004h); and *Module 12, Using Assessment to Guide Instruction* (Moats 2004k):

- Several common causes of dysfluency
- How to calculate fluency and to record and chart fluency results
- Role plays and demonstrations of several strategies for fluency building
- Less effective strategies to minimize or avoid
- How to use screening and progress monitoring as a basis for instructional decision making
- Other informal assessments—including spelling errors and writing samples—in the context of case study analysis
- How to pinpoint the needs of at-risk students
- Selecting diagnostic tests that measure phoneme and morpheme awareness, decoding and word analysis, spelling, written composition, reading fluency, and comprehension

